"THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."—CHRIST.

The Christian Freeman.

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GIVE AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN.

A STORY WITH A MORAL.

ONCE upon a time two poor old widows lived in the same hamlet and under the same roof. But though the cottages joined and one roof covered them, they had each a separate dwelling; and although they were alike in age and circumstances, yet in other respects they were very different. For one dame was covetous, though she had little to save, and the other was liberal, though she had little to give.

Now on the rising ground opposite to the widows' cottages stood a monastery where a few pious and charitable brethren spent their time in prayer, labour, and good works. And with the alms of these monks, and the kindness of neighbours, and because their wants were few, the old women dwelt in tolerable comfort, and had daily bread, and lay warm at night.

Now one evening, when the covetous old widow was having supper, there came a knock at the door. Before she opened it she hastily put away the remains of her meal. "For," said she, "it is a stormy night, and ten to one some belated vagabond wants shelter; and when there are victuals on the table every fool must be asked to sup."

When, however, she opened the door, a monk, with his cowl pulled over his head to shelter him from the storm, stepped into the cottage. Much disconcerted at having kept one of the brotherhood waiting, the widow loudly apologised, and dusted a chair for her reverend guest; but the monk stopped her string of regrets adding, "I fear I cut short your evening meal, my daughter."

"Now in the name of ill-luck, how came he to guess that?" thought the widow, as with anxious civility she began to press the monk to take some supper after his walk; for the good woman always felt hospitably inclined towards anyone who was likely to return her kindness sevenfold.

The brother, however, refused to sup; and as he seated himself, the widow looked sharply through her spectacles to see if she could gather from any charitable distension of the folds of his frock whether a loaf, a bottle of cordial, or a new winter's cloak were most likely to crown the visit. No undue protuberance being visible about the monk's person, she turned her eyes to his face, and found that her visitor was one of the brotherhood whom she had not seen before. And not only was his face unfamiliar, it was utterly unlike the kindly but rough countenances of her charitable patrons. None that she had ever seen boasted the noble beauty, the chiselled and refined features, of the monk before her. And she could not but notice that, although only one rushlight illumined her room, and though the monk's cowl went far to shade him even from that, yet a bright light always seemed to be on his face, making his clear skin almost transparent. Her curiosity must have been greatly stirred, had not her prevailing passion of greed made her more anxious to learn what he brought than who he was.

"It's a terrible night," quoth the monk, at length. "Such tempests without only give point to the indoor comforts of the wealthy; but it chills the very marrow of the poor and destitute."

"Aye, indeed," sniffed the widow, with a shiver. "If it were not for the charity of good Christians, what would poor folk do for comfort on such an evening as this."

"It was that very thought, my daughter," said the monk, with a sudden earnestness on his shining face, "that brought me forth even now through the storm to your cottage."

"Heaven reward you!" cried the widow, fervently.

"Heaven does reward the charitable!" replied the monk. "To no truth do the Scriptures bear such constant and unbroken witness; even as it is written: 'He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth to the Lord, and look, what he layeth out it shall be paid him again.'"

"What a blessed thing it must be to be able to do good!" sighed the widow piously, wishing in her heart that the holy man would not delay to earn his recompense.

"My daughter," said the monk, "that blessing is not withheld from you. It is to ask your help for those in greater need than yourself that I am come to-night." And forthwith the good brother began to tell how two strangers had sought shelter at the monastery. Their house had been struck by lightning, and burnt with all it contained; and they themselves, aged, poor, and friendless, were exposed to the fury of the storm. "Our house is a poor one," continued the monk. "The stranger's lodging-room was already full, and we are quite without the means of making these poor souls comfortable. You at least have a sound roof over your head, and if you can spare one or two things for the night, they shall be returned to-morrow, when some of our guests depart."

The widow could hardly conceal her vexation and disappointment. "Now, dear heart, holy father!" cried she, "is there not a rich body in the place, that you come for charity to a poor old widow like me, that am in a case rather to borrow myself than to lend to others?"

"Can you lend us a spare blanket?" said the monk. "These poor strangers have been out in the storm, remember."

The widow started. "What meddling busybody told him that the Baroness gave me a new blanket at Michaelmas?" thought she; but at last very unwillingly she went to an inner room to fetch a blanket from her bed.

"They shan't have the new one, that's flat," muttered the widow; and she drew out the old one and began to fold it up. But though she had dwelt on its thinness and insufficiency to the Baroness, she was so powerfully affected at parting with it, that all its good qualities came strongly to her mind.

"It's a very suitable size," said she to herself, "and easy for my poor old arms to shake or fold. With careful usage it would last for years yet; but who knows how two wandering bodies that have been tramping miles through the storm will kick about in their sleep? And who knows if they're decent folk at all? Likely enough they're two hedge birds, that have imposed a pitiful tale on the good fathers, and never slept under anything finer than a shock of straw in all their lives."

The more the good woman thought of this the more she felt sure it was the case, and the less willing she became to lend her blanket to a couple of cheating tramps. A sudden idea decided her. "Ten to one they bring a fever with them!" she cried; "and dear knows I saw enough good bedding burnt after the black fever, ten years ago! It would be a sin and a shame to burn a good blanket like this." And repeating "a sin and a shame" with great force, the widow restored the blanket to its place.

"The coverlet's not worth much," she thought; "but my goodman bought it the year after we were married, and if anything happened to it I should never forgive myself. The old shawl's good enough for tramps." Saying which she took a ragged old shawl from a peg, and began to fold it up. And even as she brushed and folded, she began to grudge the faded rag. "It saves my better one on a bad day," she sighed; "but I suppose the father must have something."

And accordingly she took it to the monk, saying, "It's not so good as it has been, but there's warmth in it yet, and it cost a pretty penny when new."

"And is this all that you can spare to the poor houseless strangers?" asked the monk.

"Ay, indeed, good father," said she, "and that will cost me many a twinge of rheumatics. Folk at my age can't lie cold at night for nothing."

"These poor strangers," said the monk, "are as aged as yourself, and have lost everything."

But as all he said had no effect in moving the widow's compassion, he departed, and knocked at the door of her neighbour. Here he told the same tale, which met with a very different hearing. This widow was one of those liberal souls whose possessions always make them feel uneasy unless they

are being accepted, or used, or borrowed by some one else; and she blessed herself that, thanks to the Baroness, she had a new blanket fit to lend to the king himself, and only desired to know what else she had with which she could serve the poor strangers and requite the charities of the brotherhood.

The monk confessed that all the slender stock of household goods in the monastery was in use, and one after another he accepted the loan of almost all the widow had. As she gave them he put them out through the door, saying that he had a messenger outside; and having promised that everything should be duly restored on the morrow, he departed, leaving the widow with little else than the chair in which she was to pass the night.

When the monk had gone the storm raged with greater fury than before, and at last one terrible flash of lightning struck the widows' house, and though it did not hurt the old women, it set fire to the roof, and both cottages were soon ablaze. Now as the terrified old creatures hobbled out into the storm they met the monk, who, crying, "Come to the monastery!" seized an arm of each, and hurried them up the hill. To such good purpose did he help them that they seemed to fly, and arrived at the convent gate they hardly knew how.

Under a shed by the wall were the goods and chattels of the liberal widow.

"Take back thine own, daughter," said the monk; "thy charity hath brought its own reward."

"But the strangers, good father," said the perplexed widow.

"You are the strangers," answered the monk, "and what thy pity thought meet to be spared for the unfortunate, heaven in thy misfortune hath spared to thee." Then turning to the other widow, he drew the old shawl from beneath his frock, and gave it to her, saying, "I give you joy, dame, that this hath escaped the flames. It is not so good as it has been; but there is warmth in it yet, and it cost a pretty penny when new."

Full of confusion, the illiberal widow took back her shawl, murmuring, "Lack-a-day! If I had but known it was ourselves the good father meant!"

The monk gave a shrewd smile.

"Ay, ay, it would have been different, I doubt not," said he; "but accept the lesson, my daughter, and when next thou art called upon to help the unfortunate, think that it is thine own needs that would be served; and it may be thou shalt judge better as to what thou canst spare."

As he spoke, a flash of lightning lit up the ground where the monk stood, making a vast aureole about him in the darkness of the night. In the bright light his countenance appeared stern and awful in its beauty, and when the flash was past the monk had vanished also.

Furthermore, when the widows sought shelter in the monastery, they found that the brotherhood knew nothing of their strange visitor.

THE SUMMER RESIDENCE OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

FORTIFIED cities at all times are less agreeable places to live in than unwalled towns, and this was still more the case in ancient times than at present. Jerusalem, a city on a rock, with no drainage, was probably deserted by the wealthy in the hot and unhealthy weather. We glean indistinctly from history, that in that season of the year the kings of Judah found a more pleasant place of residence on the high ground on the north-west side of the city, near the springs of the brook Gihon; there they lived under a tent in a cooler atmosphere, by the side of the pools from which the city was partly supplied with water. There David in his old age was dwelling when he determined to make Solomon his successor, as we read in I. Kings, c. i. 38, 39. By David's command the chief priest brought Solomon to Gihon on the king's own mule, and taking a horn of oil out of the tent, anointed him as king, evidently, though the historian does not say so, in David's own presence. Again, Isaiah is ordered to go forth and meet King Ahaz at the end of the conduit of the upper pool. The king was probably there living under his summer tent at the sources of the brook Gihon. In the same way the kings of Israel found the town of Samaria, a small fortress on a hill-top, an unpleasant residence when danger did not drive them there, and preferred dwelling in the gardens of Tirzah, an ancient Canaanitish city, pleasantly situated, we understand from the records of it, and was made by Jeroboam, for a time, the capital of his kingdom.

MELCHISEDEC.

A LAY SERMON.

"Melchisedec — without father, without mother, without descent? – Jesus made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Hebrews.

WHATEVER doubt may arise as to the authorship or authority of this epistle to the Hebrews, two things seem certain: it was written at a very early period of Christian history, and the argument which runs through its entire length is able, striking, and ingenious. The evident design of the writer was to show to the Hebrew inquirer that, even from a Judaic point of view, and upon Judaic bases, the religion of Christ was entitled to acceptance and belief. For the new religion, the writer urges, is only the old religion perfected and completed; all the old ideas are present in it; all that was significant in the old ritual is preserved, and the only difference is the old religion has entered into a new and divine form. And just as in the history of religious experience no form of religious truth has wielded so potent an influence as that which presents a *living figure—a divine man*—as its very heart and centre —so it might be conceived that this form — set over against the dull routine and dead forms of Judaism—set over against, and not superseding, but perfecting and completing them—would not be without its effect upon any candid Hebrew inquirer.

One link in the argument here employed by the writer it is my present business to examine.

The eternal priesthood of Aaron—in other words, the priesthood of lineal descent in a certain family—what place was it possible to find for that in the new religion? Say that Jesus Christ was victim and offering, and the old Mosaic ceremonial would seem to gain by the change; but say he was likewise priest, and that would seem to aim a deadly blow at one of the clearest and most certain of the Mosaic institutions. For assuredly Jesus Christ was not of the tribe of Levi — inherited no priestly functions; and how, then, could he be priest without a complete subversion of the original idea? There seemed a breach here which no ingenuity could possibly bridge over.

The writer's reply is prompt and fearless. He does not so much meet the argument as turn it aside. He flashes before the mind of the Hebrew inquirer the idea of another and superior order of priesthood. He confidently urges that there is another order recognised in Hebrew records and traditions—an order that reaches further back, and is of higher authority—the order of Melchisedec—the greater sacredness of which is testified to in the fact that Abraham, who "carried in his loins" the whole Hebrew race, the family of Levi included, rendered homage to Melchisedec as priest, "paying tithes." At great length and with great force the writer works out this argument. To this older and grander order, he asserts, Jesus Christ belongs, and of this order is "priest for ever."

What, now, are the characteristic marks of this order? These are indicated in the pregnant phrases used by the writer in describing its typal man—Melchisedec, "Without father, without mother, without descent."

The natural order, then, of spiritual generation is suspended in the men forming this class. "Without father, without mother." To the ordinary influences acting upon the mind and character they are little or nothing. Greater than their circumstances, greater than their several environment, greater than their own individual culture, their faculty of whatever sort is the gift of God. Their anointment to the high office they sustain is the inexpungable anointment of a gifted nature, and the special action of God's own spirit upon their minds and hearts. And just as they own no spiritual ancestry—are "without father and mother"—so neither have they spiritual descent;" they cannot communicate their special power to others.

With these men is "the secret of the Lord." These stand face to face before the "open vision." They commune with God at first hand. They *see*, because God himself has unsealed their eyes. The veils of sense and habit vanish before their piercing glance. Sacred books, sacred traditions, sacred rites, apparently so necessary to most men, utterly fail to satisfy their longings, or to meet the demands of their rapt and exalted intelligence. Their mission it is to bring back again to the world's astonished and enraptured gaze the divine realities of life—the underlying meaning—the abiding law—the eternal truth. Nature's favourite children, it is theirs to embrace

the world and life in something of their old freshness and meaning—unstained and undimmed by the vapours of age and conventionality. Often unconscious themselves of their high privileges and calling, and only sensible of a strange power acting within and upon them—often faulty in their own lives and character—often crude and unpractical in their notions—generally unsystematic and inconsequent in their reasonings, and, with reference to the formal culture of their times, falling below instead of rising above the average, they yet move very "kings" amongst men, and leave in the "sands of time" footprints which are never effaced.

Examined in the light of the terms used by the writer here, and in the light of history and experience, several things might be affirmed of these men.

(1) They are "priests." The rudest and most uncultivated, alike with the most refined and intelligent, coming into contact with one of this order instantly recognises his greatness and bows before his sovereignty. He finds the insignia of his greatness not indeed in any outward equipment, which, indeed, is generally absent, but in a certain strange charm which envelopes him like the atmosphere, and in a certain strange influence over himself which he cannot resist. As I have said, he bows before his sovereignty. He sets him *apart* in his thoughts. He refuses to apply ordinary rules of conduct to him. To him he is a "priest"—a something set apart—a something sacred, even awful. There is not one of us but has met with examples of this class, either in their bodily or spiritual presence, and has experienced these emotions of wonder, awe, and reverence.

(2) They are of every age and country. Not mounting up to a large number in all, every age in every country has yet seen one or more of them. Away there in the farthest distance—on the very verge of historic time—see here Melchisedec, looming large and grand in his shadowy and solitary greatness. His appearance in the historic page is but brief and casual, but the writer of this epistle shall tell us how strangely and powerfully he had impressed his name in the Hebrew imagination—as of some mysterious and awful character which it could never fully and clearly comprehend. Along the track of Hebrew history see Moses, David, Elijah, and the prophets, commencing with Isaiah down to John the Baptist, one of the "greatest born of woman;" a long, grand procession, the like of which it has been given to no other age and country to see. Touching one point of this track, see, out of what is called profane history, Baalam was surely a veritable prophet of God. Still out of profane history see also the almost traditional Roman Numa, the great Grecians Socrates and Plato, the Chinese Confucius, the deities of the Scandinavian mythology, and all the founders of the great systems of religion. "Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world."

(3) There is a substantial identity between these men. This oneness is seen and recognised by many of them. The truth of each one, if not identical with that of another, fits in with it, and helps to make up the grand perfect whole. The special and individual truth indeed, is far less certain and apparent than the common and universal. Each has his own dialect, but the same language is spoken. Each strikes his own chord, but the perfect harmony is never broken. Over wide centuries—from the most distant points in space—the same pure, clear light flashes, even in hue often the same.

Standing, now, in the presence thus invoked of this sublime order of priests—in the presence of these gods—endowed, God-taught, God-moved men—how mean and pitiful appear the priesthoods of lineal descent, or of the so-called apostolical succession? Poor halting, stumbling creatures of the earth, what have *these* in common with *those*—the winged messengers of heaven and direct from heaven? Leaving, then, the Hebrew inquirer, whom the writer here is supposing to be persuaded in his own mind, or otherwise, of the transcendent supremity of this order of priests to the Levitical, let us now proceed to inquire what relation Jesus Christ bears to the order. Of this order he is "priest for ever." Of all that long line he is the one abiding priest. His alone is an *everlasting* priesthood. Upon what ground, now, does this exalted distinction rest?

It rests on the ground that all that man can require of another is found in him. He absorbs in himself all the glories, all the functions of priesthood. "He" alone "is the way, the truth, and the life." He is truth for the intellect, the heart, the con-

science, the life. All that any man need do, to find "rest" for his soul, is to submit himself to his guidance. The wisest gather about him, each with his own bit and fragment of truth, laboriously thought out, or gleaned from many quarters, and wonder to find he is before them in the possession of it, and that, in his hands, it coheres and harmonises. The simplest and most illiterate listen to his truth, and find it to satisfy their heart's every desire. Who anticipates the time when the teaching of Jesus will be dismissed as an old-world fable? "He is the way." Walking in his footsteps, we feel we may walk confidently and securely. Other examples only mislead; his alone is the perfect example—the example which cannot betray or deceive. Linked to him, as "the way," we find we gain in him companion and friend, as well as guide and example. It is as though a blessed divine and human sympathy waited upon our every step; he is "the life." Through him comes all that emancipates our hearts and minds from dark and distressing thoughts and from low aims and affections, all that invigorates and engages our nature in its best and highest parts, all that gives interest to every true human engagement and work, all that gives freedom and joy and dignity to existence. "The liberty wherewith Jesus makes his people free" is no idle vaunt, but a blessed faith and reality. "He is the way, the truth, and the life."

But thus fulfilling the highest functions of priesthood, did not the order typified in Melchisedec itself terminate in his appearance? Is there room for other representatives? I judge there is. From out of the fulness of God there seem to me still to come forth men of this order. And there is room for them—work for them to do. Even in Christian countries there is work. For ever and anon there gather upon the divine deposit of truth bequeathed by Jesus Christ to the world, and upon the person and character of Jesus himself, incrustations—incrustations the product of use and habit, and of a too curious philosophy; and their hand is wanted to remove these incrustations from the precious one. By their deeper and keener spiritual insight they detect the real from the unreal, the essential and external from the accidental and temporary, and then use is found in exposing the real and eternal once more to the gaze of men. Yet, then, there is always this difference between the anti-Christian and post-Christian examples of this order. The former stand forth individual, independent conduits, as it were, of the divine thought and glory—imperfect conduits at the best; the latter are content simply to reflect the image of Jesus Christ, because they discern in him a fulness and splendour of the divine glory which they can discern nowhere else. And wonderful is it to observe how increasingly these very kings of men—these men of exalted natures—the men of genius, as we choose to call them—wonderful is it and beautiful to observe how increasingly, once they have "been with Jesus," they are content, and more than content, to sit at his feet and learn of him. And how wonderful must be the attractions of his life and character to call forth the admiration and devotion of such men as these—the representives in our times of the order of Melchisedec!

REVISED TRANSLATIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES.

WHAT UNITARIANS HAVE DONE.

THE most of people have been informed of the disreputable efforts of a party to have the Rev. Dr. G. Vance Smith expelled from the Bible Revision Committee, solely because he is a Unitarian. This attempt for a time has been defeated, and those concerned in it have been humbled. If any denomination had a title to a representative man on the committee, surely the Unitarians above all others had, as they have done more in the past than any other religious body, that the English reader might have in his hand a good translation of the Holy Scriptures. The British and Foreign Unitarian Association, at great cost, issued a three volume edition of the Holy Bible of the Old Covenant in a revised translation by Wellbeloved, G. Vance Smith, and Scott Porter, 1859; and many years before printed the improved version of the New Testament by Belsham and others. This work was done when it was a very unpopular thing to propose a revision of the Scriptures. That Greek scholars might have a cheap edition of the invaluable labours of Griesbach, in his New Testament, the Association printed it, the cheapest Greek Testament that can be had in Christendom, and it is now on sale

at their rooms, London, at one shilling. The late President of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and one of the most active and liberal of living Unitarians, Samuel Sharpe, has carefully translated both the Old and New Testament, and offers the four volumes at a very cheap price. The first edition of Mr. Sharpe's New Testament from Griesbach's text was published in 1840, the sixth edition in 1869. Ten thousand copies have been sold. The first edition of the Hebrew Scriptures Translated came out in 1865, the second edition in 1871. We have reason to believe that the version of the Revision Committee now in hand will fall short of the accuracy of the work which has been declared by critics to be the best in the English language. The Unitarians have always had the greatest interest in a clear understanding of the Scriptures. It was this that caused the celebrated John Locke to write a paraphrase of Paul's Epistles from the original Greek, which has done much service to make plain Paul's letters. The Unitarian scholars of the last century did some service in this direction. We may name William Whiston's Primitive New Testament, 1745. Dr. Harwood's Liberal Translation of the New Testament, 1768; and Gilbert Wakefield's Translation of the New Testament, 1795. We have referred to some translations of the present century. To these we can add the New Testament Revised, by a Layman, Edgar Taylor, 1840. Also the New Testament Translated from the Greek Text of Tischendorf by Rev. Robert Ainslie, 1869. The American Unitarians have not been behind in their desire and efforts to have an improved version, and, therefore, Professor Noyes has done good service by translations of the Old and New Testament. Three other learned men (Unitarians) have each given the world the benefit of their experience: Professor Noyes the whole of the Bible, and Professors Morrison and Norton a portion of the New Testament. We may ask, is there another sect in Christendom—small as the Unitarian body is—that has produced so much literature of this kind as the Unitarian Church? Nothing but the narrowest bigotry, and culpable ignorance of all this, could have dictated to the Upper House of Convocation the exclusion of the scholarly Dr. Vance Smith because he was a minister of the Unitarian Church.

LOW LIVES WE LED OF CARE AND SIN.

HENRY ABBEY.

Low lives we led of care and sin,
Low lives with but one aim, to win
Our brown and bitter bread.
We dwelt beside a mountain's base,
And ever more its rugged face
Rose sphinx-like overhead.
We could not read a meaning there;
We only saw, high up in air,
A pile of rocks and trees.
We had not climbed the massive height:
Enough for us the small delight
To sit betimes at ease.
"What good," we asked, "would come to stand
Upon the wind swept tableland,
And look on fields below?"
We sneered, content within the vale:
We had nor will nor wish to scale
The cliffs where cedars grow.

But haply on a cloudless day
A neighbour on his journey's way,
Saw, at the sunset hour,
The sun upon our mountain high
Rest like a golden butterfly
Upon an azure flower.

All thoughts at last perform some use;
The good or ill that they produce
Must soon or late befall.
When he returned, our neighbour said,
"There may be fertile lands o'erhead
Upon the mountain wall."

At this we climbed the flinty crags
And vines above us waved like flags
Of welcome o'er a town.
Past June-clad plains we wandered by,
And lakes in which the loving sky
Narcissus-like looked down.

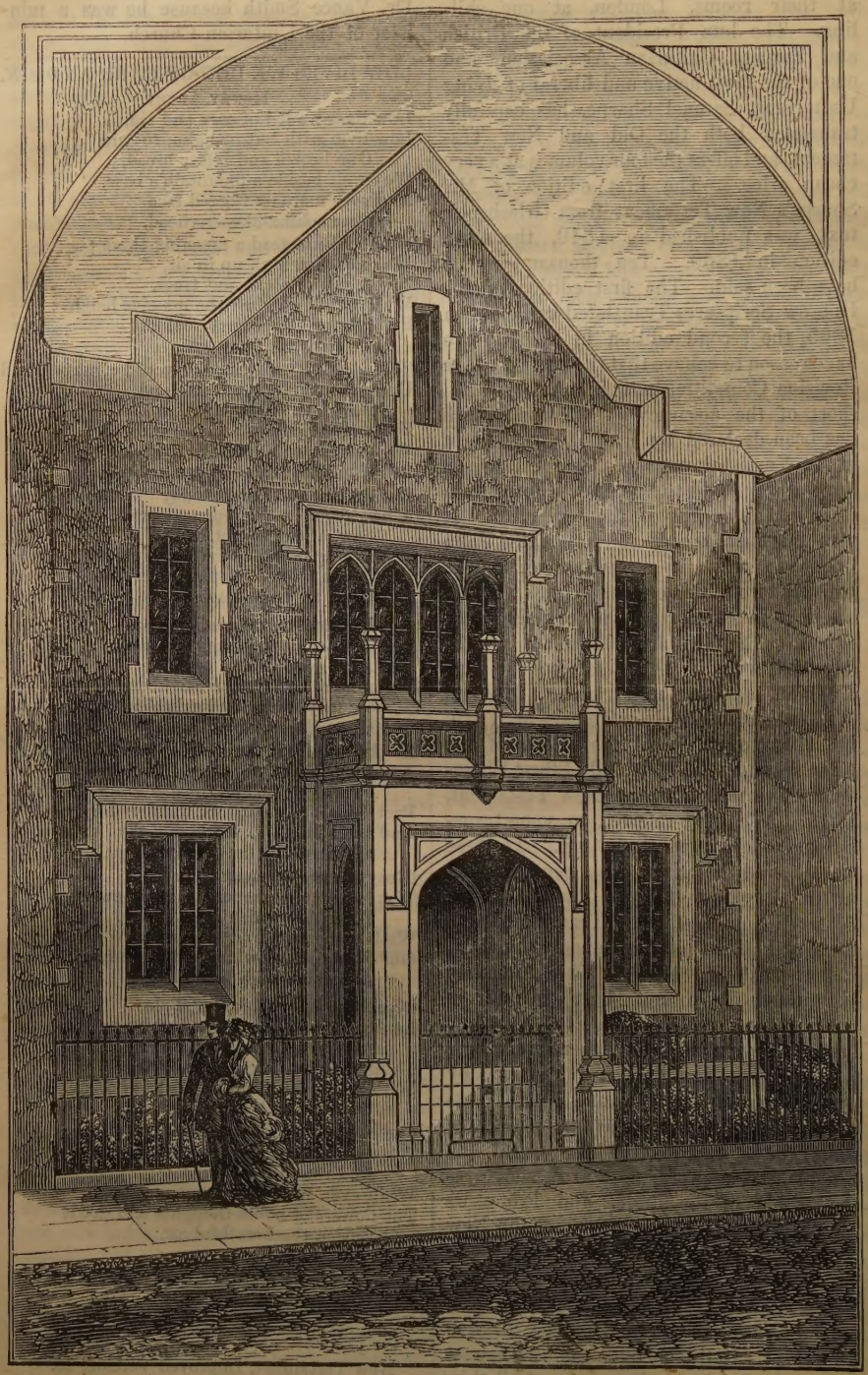
The even grass beneath our feet
Was something greener and more sweet
Than that which grew below.
We breathed a purer, better air;
Our lives seemed wider and more fair,
And earth with love aglow.

O ye, long used to care and sin,
Look up! take heart! and strive to win
A nobler higher ground!
Think not that Virtue sits alone,
Withdrawn, on frowning peaks of stone,
Where only thorns abound.

She rather has but quiet dells
Where, with her kin, in peace she dwells,
And round her all is fair;
While ever, in her pleasant meads,
The flowers of noble thoughts and deeds
Enrich the breathful air.

REVISED VERSIONS FOR SALE.

The following are always on sale:—
Old Testament by Wellbeloved, &c., 6s.
Do. do. Sharpe, 7s. 6d.
New Testament, Improved Version, 1s.
Do. do. do. Sharpe, 1s. 3d.
Do. do. do. Ainslie, 5s.
H. BRACE, 178, Strand.



FREE-THINKING CHRISTIANS' MEETING-HOUSE, ST. JOHN'S-SQUARE, LONDON.

FREE-THINKING CHRISTIANS' MEETING-HOUSE,

ST. JOHN'S SQUARE, LONDON.

We present our readers this month with a view of a handsome little meeting-house in London, the origin and history of which cannot fail to be of considerable interest to our people.

About the close of the last century there was in London a congregation of Universalists—believers in the final restoration of all men to holiness and happiness, under the leadership of Mr. Vidler. This Church had been commenced by Mr. Winchester, as a protest against that awful doctrine of endless suffering, exalted into such prominence by the preaching of Wesley and Whitfield. In 1798 a few of the members of this Universalist Church began to doubt, and then deny, the doctrine of the Trinity; and, as the minister of this Universalist Church, at Parliament-court Chapel, Bishopsgate-street, and the members generally, were Trinitarians, this difference of view led to a separation. We may add here that it is an interesting fact to us Unitarians, that, although the Universalist Church of America, as well as in England, commenced its career a century ago as a Trinitarian Church, at the present time that denomination almost everywhere is now Unitarian. It was not so in 1798, hence the separation and the formation of a new Church, first called HUMBLE INQUIRERS AFTER TRUTH, and ten years after, in 1808, called FREE-THINKING CHRISTIANS. The last meeting of this body, in the chapel at St. John's-square, was held on Sunday, March 19th, 1871, and the chapel is now rented by the London District Unitarian Society as one of its mission stations. This has led to our present notice of the FREE-THINKING CHRISTIANS, who may be said to be now dissolved, not only in London, but throughout the country, for they formerly had a few chapels in the country, Battle, Cranbrook, Loughborough, and Dewsbury. The few remaining members and their families at these different places, as in London, are now chiefly associated with the Unitarian Church.

The first meeting was held in a member's house on November 18th, 1798, and we may say it originated in a protest against the doctrine of the Trinity. They say in their declaration at that time:—"Thus having, in the integrity of our souls, set forth our reasons, we trust we can appeal to the Searcher of Hearts that we separate from our brethren in Parliament-court in love."

On the 24th of March, 1799, after solemn preparation and prayer, they resolved themselves into a Church founded solely upon the laws and authority of the Scripture. Their sentiments upon many matters underwent considerable change. They resolved that in their Church there should be no hired or special teacher. Every man as he felt he had ability was encouraged to give his word of exhortation. They rejected the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and they also gave up public social worship. In all their assemblies they had neither singing nor prayer. They rejected the deity of Christ, vicarious sacrifice, &c. In short, on doctrinal matters they occupied much the same position as the Unitarian Church in general. There was at least a novelty about the Sunday meeting which for a considerable time drew many thoughtful men around them. The elder for the quarter read a portion of Scripture and stated the subject for consideration; at his call several speakers, one after another, addressed the church and the audience. A second reading of Scripture closed the meeting.

Members were admitted, after three months' probation, in the following manner:—After the meeting the elder asked the proposed member, "Are you a believer in the Divine mission of Jesus, and that he was raised from the dead by the power of God, and are you desirous to submit your conduct to the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures?" These questions being answered in the affirmative, the elder welcomed the new member.

In the year 1808 they attracted much attention in London through an attempt publicly to disprove "the existence of a being called *the devil*." This was too much for the orthodox to bear, and the then Bishop of London (Porteous) is accused of having incited the magistrates to put them down. They appeared at the Mansion House, and sustained their right to hold their meetings notwithstanding their doubts about a personal devil. So-

ciety and the Church have made some progress during the last sixty years, for it would be more difficult to find educated men now who believe in the devil than those who deny his existence. In 1810 they were enabled to build a respectable meeting-house in the Crescent, Jewin-street, and sometimes drew nearly four hundred persons to their service. St. John's Chapel was opened in 1832. In 1811 they commenced the "Free Thinking Christian's Magazine," and continued it till 1814. They commenced the "Free Thinking Christian's Register" in 1823 and continued it until 1825.

This denomination took a very decided and active part for several years to bring about a reform in the English marriage ceremony. Dissenters, especially Unitarian Dissenters, had a great grievance till the reform of the marriage law. The Free-thinking Christians, like others, were married in their parish churches, some of them protesting all through the service against what they presumed to be the errors of the State Church service. They were also very courageous in their petitions to Parliament against the ceremony, and declared "that the worship connected with this ceremony is *idolatrous*—the language of prayer being therein to Christ—who hath himself proclaimed, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.'" They also begged the honourable House "to put an end to the connection between Church and State." There was a fearlessness in their conduct which puts to shame some of our timid talk, in the present day, against huge and scandalous evils which still afflict the nation. The leaders and the great majority of this body have gone to their rest and reward. Like all faithful men, they have done some service for the cause of pure religion, and wherein they failed through mistakes, omissions, and hasty conclusions, they have left a beacon to save other Churches from a similar experiment and fate.

GOOD FRIDAY.

WAS IT A DREAM?

It seemed to me that I stood among a great multitude; all were eagerly pressing towards a temple that crowned the summit of a steep and barren hill. I watched them as they hurried past, and when all were gone one solitary figure came slowly and painfully along the way. He bent beneath a heavy cross, his face was pale and sad, a crown of thorns was on his brow, his form was worn and weary. I beheld the Christ. For a moment I thought that some picture I had seen had taken bodily shape before me, and that I was in a waking vision. But as he drew nearer I knew his living presence, and going forward to meet him, I fell down and worshipped, saying, "Nay, Lord, thou art risen and ascended! Why dost thou bear thy cross again up the steep heights of Calvary?"

Then he made answer, in a voice whose sad tones ring ever in my ears, "My son, I go to be crucified again!"

"That cannot be, O Lord," I said, "for all men love thee now; they follow thee, they worship thee, thy cross is the symbol of their faith, the power of their priesthood, all the world is beneath thy feet, and thou art Lord of all."

"My son," he answered once again, "I go to be crucified! Behold, and see the truth!"

Then he touched my eyes, and scales fell from them. He bid me look on after the multitude that had gone up before us; they had reached the temple, and as I gazed in I beheld the whole assemblage kneeling there to worship. But the Christ was not there. Only behind an altar was some mysterious thing, without form or shape, yet inconceivable and infinite in its terror and its awfulness. Before this fearful power, whose curse had gone forth over all the children of men, whom to see or touch was instant death, there hung a thick veil, so that the worshippers might worship and yet live; and on this veil was woven, in bright, life-like colours, the semblance of Christ's death. To this lifeless image of Christ upon the cross, wrought upon the tapestry, did all the people pray, saying, "Save us, O our Saviour, from the wrath of God—hide us from His anger! Be thou still between us, that His hand touch us not, thy death hath satisfied His wrath, thy sacrifice has been acceptable unto Him! Thy blood for ever cries to Him for mercy upon us, thou hast suffered all His anger instead of us—therefore do we worship thee, therefore do we praise thee, and we pray to thee, our only safety!"

Then I saw some among the company who bade the rest draw near, and lo! upon

the altar lay a bleeding lamb, and before the altar stood a priest having on a kingly crown, and they told me that the priest and the victim were but one, and that one was the Lord Christ. Then I beheld, and some came and broke bread and poured forth wine and gave unto the rest to eat and drink, and I heard voices saying, "Depart in peace and fear nothing. Ye have eaten the flesh and drunk the blood of the ever-living God—so the wrath of God has passed away, and His life abideth in you." And the people rose up with light hearts, and went forth to barter in their streets.

"Seest thou these things?" said the Lord there unto me; "this is the homage they pay unto images themselves have created, while I, cold and desolate, linger without; when men see me they spurn me, when I would fain draw near they drive me away, for they know me not. I came to tell them of a Father in Heaven, patient, long suffering, loving, and tender as a mother, caring for each one, and never leaving nor forsaking the most wayward of his children, and they have made for themselves an image of terror, and wrath, and indignation. I came to show them a holy God, who will save to the uttermost all His people from their sins, and because they are His children will make them holy as He is holy; and they speak of a relentless tyrant, and an eternal hell. I came to reveal to them His love, and they ask me to save them from His anger. I came to show them their likeness to their Father, and to lead them to lean on Him alone; and they say they have another father, even sin, in whose image they are born. I came to set them free, but they have chosen to be slaves. I came to open their eyes, but they have covered them with woven fancies till God's light itself cannot pierce beneath the veil. I came to unstop their ears, that the voice of God might plead with them, and they have hidden themselves among the hills, lest they should hear the thunder of His words. I came to guide them along the narrow path where His glory shines, and they wander away after each fitful light of their own devising. I lived among them to show them what a son of man should be. I suffered with them, to show them what a son of man could bear. I died for them, to show what obedience and self-sacrifice in a son of man would do. I pleaded with them as my brethren. I bade them follow in my steps. I gave them my flesh to eat, my blood to drink, for to each one I give the strength of love, the spirit of life, whereby I was able to endure. I asked them to become pure as I was pure, holy as I was holy. I asked them to come out of the bondage of the law of sin, and enter into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and lo! they will not. They look for eternal bliss hereafter, but see not the work that is before them here. They say that my death hath opened the gates of Heaven, and I shall bear them in. They seek each his own salvation from the punishment of sin, they trust that I have borne it for them, but they will not take upon their hearts the likeness to the holy one. Many long years have I waited for them, many teachers have I sent unto them, and now the burden of their waywardness is too great for me, and, bearing my cross again, I come to be crucified once more, if perchance the sight of my great agony may touch their hearts and enlighten their eyes."

"Are there none, O Lord, who know thee better, none who love thee now?" I asked.

Then he touched my eyes again, and lo! behind him followed another company; these were all following in his steps, and tracking his way, as he pressed up that weary hill. "Seest thou these," he said, "they love me, and come after me. But while many hold their Father's hand, and tread patiently in their elder brother's steps, some there are among them whose eyes are holden that they cannot see me. Only my footprints lie before them, and they must needs follow them; not knowing who their leader is, they press up, trusting that when they reach the top of the hill some light will dawn upon them, some hope will comfort their painful way, now they only care to leave behind their misery and sin."

Then I said, "Are there none, O Lord, among the worshippers in yonder temple who know thee? None whose cry can reach the ear of the Father that is in Heaven?"

"Did I not tell thee even now," he answered, "that He is never weary, and is forever seeking His children; lo, the prayers that they offer up to their dark images pierce even unto Him, and because he heareth and answereth, He hath sent me to them once again, that they may turn to Him and know Him."

Even as he spoke we reached the top of

the hill, and there he planted the cross that he had borne so long; its shadow fell across all the land, and they who had faithfully followed him lay down to rest beneath it, and he entered alone into the temple. Then did he plead once more with all that throng, then did he stretch forth his hands to bless them, so that the print of the nails was plainly to be seen, but the people looked coldly upon him, and gathering round, they said, "Who is this that cometh in the name of the Lord? He wears no priestly garments, no kingly crown is on his head, he tells us of no ransom that he has paid, he brings us no assurance that we are safe from the penalty of sin; he only bids us take up our cross and follow him, he tells us that he will show us the Father, that he will cure our souls of their sickness, that he will teach us to love the brethren, and give us strength to work for them. These things we do not need, besides we know that when Christ cometh again he will come with majesty and power, with clouds of glory to judge the earth, and the Church in all her beauty shall be with him. We know not who this man may be." So saying, they took him and crucified him upon the cross he had borne again up the hill of Calvary. Then there fell upon the earth a darkness that might be felt, and from out the awful stillness came forth a voice of holy love and supplicating mercy — "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

THE DIVINE MERCY.

THERE'S a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in his justice,
Which is more than liberty.

There's no place where earth's sorrows
Are more felt than up in heaven;
There's no place where earth's failings
Have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

But we may make His love too narrow
By false limits of our own;
And we magnify His strictness
With a zeal He will not own.

If our love were but more simple,
We should take Him at His word;
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord.

FABER.

THE FOUR WORDS.

FOR OUR CHILDREN.

"TELL us a story, grandfather," said one of a group of boys, and all the others joined in: "Yes, grandfather, tell us a story."

"Shall it be about the four words?" asked grandfather.

"Yes," they all cried out with one accord. But they did not know what the four words were. Grandfather told them, as you will now read.

"My father grafted a pear tree; it was a very choice graft, and he watched it with great care. The second year it blossomed, but it bore but one pear. As there were no more that year, my father was the more anxious about it. He hoped that no rough wind would blow it off; he looked at it every morning and evening, and was glad to find it all safe. He told all the children on no account to touch it, for the fruit was tender and must not be handled. I do not believe the thought ever struck him that any one of his children could wish to steal it.

"Every one that came to see my father was asked to look at that pear; and they all agreed that it was likely to ripen into first-rate fruit; they also said that the tree would bear many more next year, and that he had made a capital graft.

"I never touched the pear with my fingers; but my eyes were often fixed upon it, and my heart coveted the taste of it. I did not keep my heart from this wicked coveting, and therefore I became a slave to it. The desire of that pear was my master.

"One night, after we were all in bed, that master would not let me sleep. I crept up and went to the window. My father and mother were not at home, but the back door was left open for them to get in, if they came late. I put my head out of the window and saw the tree; after a while I saw the pear. I thought my mouth was parched, and I must have something juicy to moisten it. I crept down the back stairs on my naked feet, out at the door, and to the tree. A thought came to my mind: 'What will father say?' and I answered, 'He will not know.' So I had already settled it in myself that I would take the pear and eat it. I stood under the tree; I looked up with my hand

stretched out, and I saw a star looking down upon me through the leaves. All at once it was as if I heard the four words :—

'THOU, GOD, SEEST ME.'

I put my hands before my eyes, and ran as fast as I could to the opened door, up the back stairs, and to my bed. There I stood trembling. I knew that God had seen me, and I thought my father and mother and the servants and the neighbours must know of it, and that everybody would call me thief. But I crept into my bed, and after a while I felt so glad that I did not take the pear ; and I fell asleep and slept sweetly. As soon as I saw my father, on the following morning, I marked his face, it was so pleasant ; he said the pear was ripe ; it might be taken down and eaten ; who was to have it ? I cried out, hardly knowing what I did, 'God is to have it !' This was so strange an answer, that my father and mother looked wondering ; and father said very gravely, 'What put that into your head ?' I felt that my cheeks were burning hot, tears came into my eyes, and a trembling came over me again. I began to sob, and tell all about it how I was tempted to steal the pear, and how I was kept from it. My mother cried aloud ; father himself wiped his eyes, took me very tenderly to his breast, and said, 'Then it shall be as you say ; God shall have the pear, and it shall be a treat to one of God's dear children. Are you willing,' he asked mother, 'that we should give it to poor little Annie, who has been so long on her sick-bed, often with parched lips, and rarely with anything to refresh her but cold water ?' Mother consented willingly enough. She herself went with me to carry the pear to the dear, patient sufferer ; and oh ! how she joyed and thanked us ! It did me more good than if I had really had a dozen such pears given me freely to eat without fear or trembling.

"Since that day I have had the four words on my mind more times than I can count up. Ask of God, my boys, to write them into your hearts, that you may never forget, in the time of temptation or want, of sorrow or of peril, this truth which warns, restrains, and comforts,—

'THOU, GOD, SEEST ME.'"

THE LAY PREACHER.

A PATTERN MINISTER.

It has been our privilege for some years to have the acquaintance of many laymen who devote a portion of their time to preaching the Gospel. More of our educated, pure, and devout laymen ought to be encouraged to do a share of this holy work. A greater interest is felt in religion in the proportion that men are stirred up to make religion known. Many of our lay preachers are continually confessing this. The following kind letter has been handed us written by one of our laymen in the North, who is now no more, to some one who had been offended and had left the small meeting house:—

Dear William,—After returning from a Sunday's walk, I felt a desire to write and ask you again to reconsider the resolution you had formed about leaving our little Church, feeling, as I do, a great desire that nothing should retard the promulgation of our principles or that blessed advancement of human progress with which I believe them to be connected. I, of course, deprecate any disrupture in our little Christian community. I wish you to consider that you are not leaving the Church because you disagree with the purposes for which we are united ; nor are you leaving because a majority of the Church wish to interfere with your freedom, nor yet because you differ in opinion with some of its members ; *but because*, in the discussion of certain topics, *harsh expressions* were used by *one or two* members of the church toward you. Surely this is not a tenable ground for removing yourself from Christian union with a number of individuals who bore no part in that discussion, who were not even present at the debate. I assure you that I regret whatever harsh language or unkind insinuations may have been used toward you. But I do believe that they would be the mere hasty expression of a rather warm argument more than any deliberate opinion of those who used them. I trust it will be found that on all sides some misunderstanding may have arisen.

Perfect toleration, perfect charity, are things which make but slow progress, seeing that these are connected with the highest forms of human endowment. Till their sway be established you and I, with many others, will have to use forbearance, and to overlook many things which savour of the spirit of exclusion.

We cannot afford disunion when so much is to be done. We need not only sympathy of co-operation, but that cheering, comforting spirit which arises from the presence and communion with each other in our little assemblies.

I hope to see you at our meeting this afternoon, and that you will continue to be united with us, and thus show that true magnanimity which can pass over a transgression.

I am, yours affectionately,

Geo. Brown.

A WORD ABOUT SPIRITUALISM.

It would be difficult to decide whether more nonsense has been written about spiritualism by its advocates or its opponents. To study in detail everything that has been produced by its influence would be an endless task, and one leading to no valuable result. In all cases when it is possible to do so, it is much better to begin at the centre, in examining any system of thought or ideas, and to endeavour first of all to understand the fundamental principles on which the system is based, and out of which its legitimate applications and practical details are unfolded.

Rightly understood it rests upon and results from three propositions :—

First,—Man has a spiritual nature, or is, in part, a spiritual being.

Second,— Man's spirit survives the dissolution of the body, and has naturally a permanent existence.

Third,— Disembodied human beings or spirits may communicate, and sometimes do communicate, with those who are still in the body.

The first two propositions form part of the belief of about all who profess Christianity. All that is distinctive in Spiritualism depends upon the third article, which affirms the possibility and actual occurrence of communication between those who have passed beyond death and those who are still in the flesh. It is scarcely necessary to say that this belief has been held, not only by many thoughtful and wise men in all ages since history began, but by many Christians in every age since the time of Christ. Both the Old and New Testament Scriptures contain accounts of such communications, which are as well authenticated as anything else in those writings ; and, although in many places the term angel refers to human beings still inhabitants of this world, there are passages which do not admit of being so easily explained or understood. We know of no reason for doubting the essential truthfulness of the New Testament story of the Transfiguration of Jesus, as it is called; and we are unable to see how anyone can disbelieve the possibility of communication between the two worlds, or deny that such communication has ever occurred, without denying the truthfulness of the Christian Scriptures.

If any spirit ever spoke from the world beyond death to one still on the earth, the same thing may occur again. Everything that has ever been urged against this view is pure assumption, dogmatism without any foundation whatever. But, of course, the fact that a thing has been once does not make it certain that it will be again ; it only shows that it is possible. We know of nothing in the nature of things which makes such communication impossible; and if we reject the testimony of history upon this matter, we know of no sufficient reason for receiving such testimony in regard to any subject whatever. So, for ourself, we believe that such intercourse between dwellers in the two worlds is possible—that is, has sometimes taken place—and that it may occur again.

Spiritualism as a movement is, legitimately, the awakening, development, and diffusion of this belief, and of personal interest and enthusiasm inspired by this doctrine. So far there is not necessarily anything hurtful about it. But some people have given this belief exaggerated importance as a basis for the conduct of life. It is not properly a system of religion ; it is not broad enough for that.

In connection with the recent general awakening of interest in the subject of spiritual communications which began in this country a little less than a quarter of a century ago, and has since extended nearly all over the world, there has been much heated controversy, with violent dogmatism on both sides. The spiritualist movement has taken up and drawn along with it much of the prevalent dissent and scepticism of our time. Some of the good things, and some of the evils, exaggerations, and perversions connected with the movement have resulted from the fact that it arose, and has had its chief strength, among the common people, and not among scholars or in any select class of trained minds.

But the chief perversions and mischiefs pertaining to spiritualism grow out of the exaggerated and unreasonable importance which multitudes of its votaries attach to utterances and messages purporting to come from denizens of the spirit-world. Many men and women have almost entirely relinquished all rational control of their own life and conduct, to follow vague impressions or passionate impulses, which they accept as revelations from higher spheres of being. Hardly any terms could be used which would be too strong to describe the cha-

racter and effect of the innumerable errors, delusions, and insanities which have grown out of this development of the doctrine of vicarious salvation—this habit of depending upon others for what men ought to do for themselves. We cannot say that none of these "messages" are genuine, that none of them really come from people in another world, but very many of them are made up of idiotic drivel, and when they are harmless, which some of them are not, they add nothing of great value to the world's stock of knowledge or thought.

For ourselves, we think that knowledge gained by study and endeavour of our own is most valuable. We do not doubt that God could send an angel from another world to instruct us if we needed knowledge which we could obtain in no other way, but we think that earnest work and trust, with the help of what has been wrought by man on the earth, will be found sufficient for the practical needs of life, so far as actual information is concerned. Then, as we go forward in the path of duty, we doubt not that all gracious, divine influences draw around us, that we are somehow happier and stronger for all the love and goodness in heaven and on earth. We do not wish to be interrupted too much in our proper work while we are in this world, and considering that all the coarse, bad men, and all the fools that have ever lived on the earth, are still alive somewhere, we hope there will always be some barrier between the other world and this.

And now we shall never say anything about Spiritualism without adding this: Among the people who bear this name and hold this belief there are many who must be classed with the very best men and women that we have ever known. Some of the most perfect and happy homes that now bless this world are those of Spiritualist families. Of course persons of this class are free from the absurdities and insanities of which we have spoken. They are thoughtful, reverent, and deep-hearted. Above all, they are *true*, they are *faithful*. They love all "things that are of good report;" they love their fellow-men, and put their religion into their lives. We cannot describe them so well any other way as by quoting what Mr. Hale says about the "Harry Wadsworth people": "The freemasonry was that you found everywhere a cheerful outlook—a perfect determination to relieve suffering, and a certainty that it could be relieved; a sort of sweetness of disposition which comes, I think, from the habit of looking across the line, as if death were little or nothing; and with that, perhaps, a disposition to be social, to meet people more than half way." Thank God for all such of whatever name. —*Liberal Christian.*

THE VOICE OF KINDNESS.

If a dog run out and bark at you do not be frightened. Ten chances to one he only means, "How do you do?" If he seems angry and riled, don't take a club to strike him, neither kick nor cuff him; don't *bark back* in any way. Speak kindly to him. Show him your good will for his ill will; and it is curious to see how quickly he will smooth down. The voice of kindness he can understand, and he is seldom mean enough to hold out against kindness.

When I came to live in my new home there was a neighbour's dog who did not like my looks. On our way down the street I had to pass his house; and no sooner did he catch sight of me than down he came, barking sharply, over the walk, as if ready to snap my head off; and since he was a large bulldog I must own to being a good deal frightened.

What could be done? He fairly made the walk miserable to me? What could be done? Complain to the police? Ask his master to chain him up? Carry a club and beat him? Poison him on the sly? What *could* be done? Well, one day Bounce saw me coming, and began howling as usual.

This time, instead of saying, "Get out, you ugly dog!" I said, "Bounce, poor fellow, come here. What do you want Bounce, brave Bounce?" He stopped on a sudden, and stared straight at me. "Did he hear right?" he seemed to say. "Bounce, poor fellow!" His dumpy tail began to wag. "Bounce!" It wagged faster as he slowly came towards me; and would you believe it, he poked his nose into my hand!

From that moment the quarrel was made up, and made up for ever. Kindness conquered. Bounce and I became friends, firm friends; and when the old fellow died two years after he had no sincerer mourner than I; and I say in memory of him that there is no surer way to overcome miffs and grudges than by kindness.

WAYSIDE GATHERINGS.

—o—

SHAME.—The *Talmud* says it is a good sign in a man to be capable of being ashamed.

GIVING.—What pleasure like that of giving! There would be no rich men if they were capable of feeling it.

A HINT.—We often omit the good we might do in consequence of thinking about that which it is out of our power to do.

HAPPINESS.—If you would be miserable, look within. If you would be distracted, look around. If you would be happy, look up.

A GOOD REASON.—We are told that in the midst of a long argument to prove that a husband ought not to beat his wife, Jeremy Taylor asks: "If he cannot endure her talk, how can she endure his beating?"

CHRIST.—Bread hath one quality, water another, raiment another, physic another; but none hath all in itself, as Christ hath: He is bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, a garment to the naked, healing to the wounded; and whatsoever a soul can desire is found in him.

SINGING AND FEELING.—Dr. Hall tells a story of a Scotchman who sung most piously the hymn:—

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small,"

and all through the singing was fumbling in his pocket to make sure of the smallest piece of silver for the contribution box.

A GOOD WIFE.—A man that marries a good wife has very little more to ask of the Lord until he dies; because, when the Lord makes up his mind to give a man a good wife, he makes up his mind to do everything else that he wants. A good wife is a blessing of the Lord, and there are few blessings that he gives, now or hereafter, that are comparable with it.

CHANNING.—According to Dr. Dewey, a distinguished professor once said, when called in question for not giving Channing his title, "I will not call *such* a man *Doctor*." Dr. Dewey himself says, "I first knew him as Mr. Channing; and I always called him so. He did not like a title. I wish the heavy and lumbering prefix, and now nearly unmeaning, too, were dropped in universal conversation."

HIT.—Thomas Williams once presented the doctrine of Apostolic Succession in a conference with an Episcopal clergyman, in this wise:—"The difference between us as to a call to the ministry is this: I believe that a man is called to preach, if he can preach. I believe that a man is called to be a blacksmith, if he can make a shoe or nail; you believe that he is so called, if he is descended from Tubal-Cain!"—which was certainly hitting the nail on the head.

USEFUL UNTO DEATH.—On the day of his death, in his eightieth year, Elliot, the apostle to the Indians, was found teaching the alphabet to an Indian child at his bedside. "Why not rest from your labours now?" said a friend. "Because," said the venerable man, "I have prayed to God to render me useful in my sphere. He has heard my prayer, for now that I can no longer preach, He leaves me strength enough to teach this poor child his alphabet."

TIGHT LACING.—A learned doctor has given his opinion that tight lacing is a public benefit, inasmuch as it kills off all the foolish girls, and leaves the wise ones to grow into women.

TRUE CHRISTIAN LIFE.—The slow, modest, moderate, compact muscular growth of the healthy body is the type of true Christian life; nourished by love, faith, and truth; and increasing slowly and surely in every grace of the spirit. Be this our growth—substance, not show; reality, not pretence; building up in holy gaith, rather than puffing up by mere worldly knowledge.

WHERE SLEEPERS ARE WANTED.—A minister who was generally able to keep his congregation wide awake, on one occasion—it was a sultry summer day—observed numbers of them asleep. He resolved to nip the evil practice in the bud. So taking a good survey of the scene before and around him, he exclaimed, "I saw an advertisement last week for five hundred sleepers for a railroad. I think I could supply at least fifty, and recommend them as good and sound!"

OLD TIME PUNCTUALITY.—An anecdote has come down to us from the olden time in relation to the then "standing order" in the eastern part of our State. A parishioner had entered the Church after morning prayer had commenced, and at the close of prayer was thus addressed by his pastor: "Neighbour Bryant, it is to your reproach that you have disturbed the worship of God by entering late, living as you do within a mile of this place, and especially so since here is Goody Barstow, who has milked seven cows, made a cheese, and walked five miles to the house of God in good season."

THEOLOGY OF NATURE.—Ye men of gloom and austerity, who paint the face of Infinite Benevolence with an eternal frown, read in the Everlasting Book, wide open to your view, the lesson it would teach. Its pictures are not in black and sombre hues, but bright and glowing tints; its music—save when ye drown it—is not in sighs and groans, but songs and cheerful sounds. Listen to the million voices in the summer air, and find one as dismal as your own. Remember, if you can, the sense of hope and pleasure which every glad return of day awakens in the breath of all your kind who have not changed their nature; and learn some wisdom even from the witless, when their hearts are lifted up, they know not how, by all the mirth and happiness it brings.—*Dickens, in "Barnaby Rudge."*

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